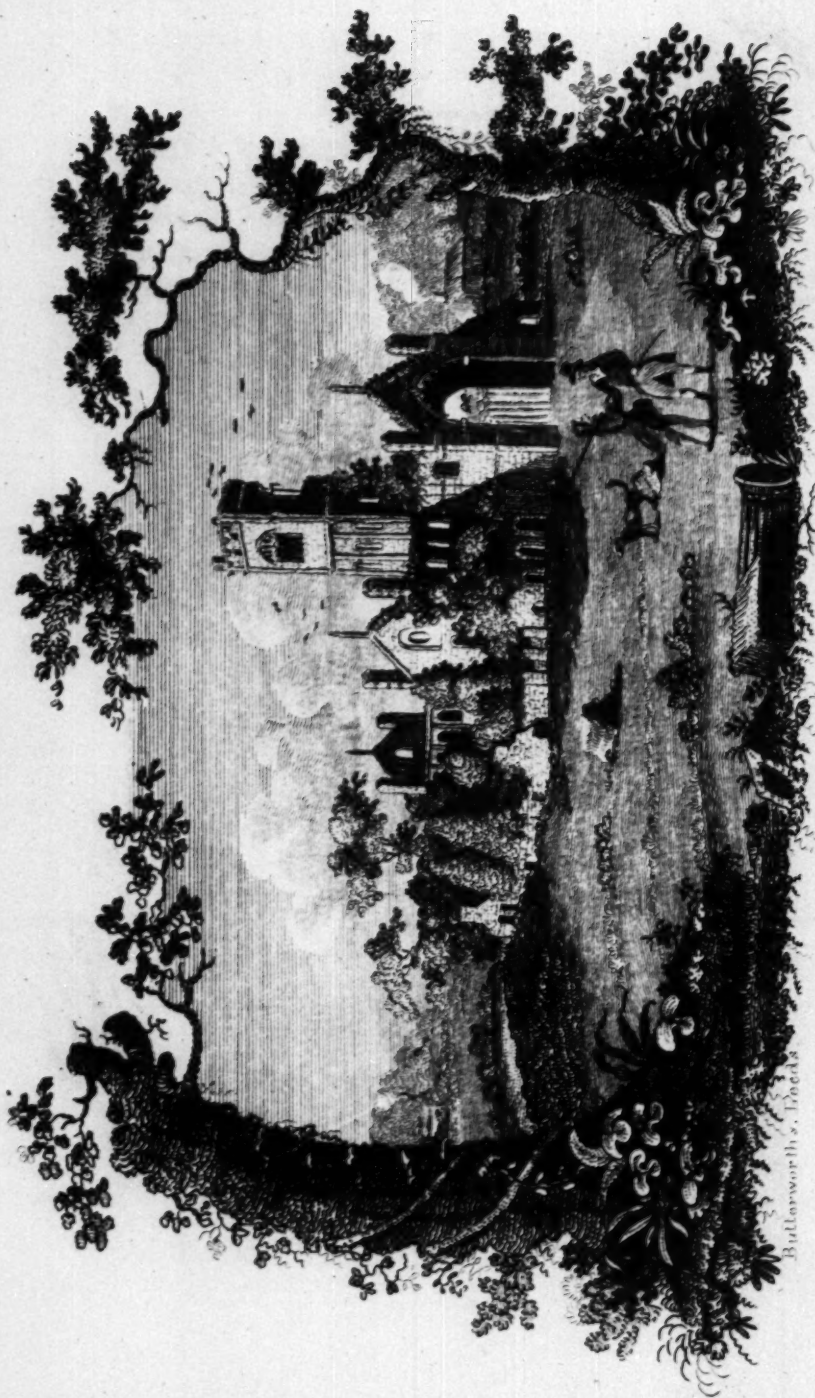


Butlerworth's Engraving

A South East View of Kirkstall Abbey.

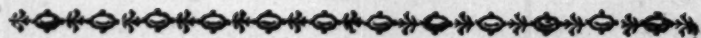
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Butlerworth's Engraving

A South East View of Kirkstall Abbey.

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HISTORY

OF

KIRKSTALL ABBEY.



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HISTORY OF KIRKSTALL ABBEY.

CHAP. I.

*Historical Sketch of the Monastic Institutions
formerly existing in England.*

THE first institution of Monasteries in this country appears to have been about the middle of the sixth century; at which period a considerable number were founded, particularly in the Northern districts; but were almost entirely destroyed by the Norway invaders, about the year 867; and were not renewed again till the year 959, in the reign of Edgar, surnamed the Peaceful; when some foreign Monks again renewed the monastic profession at Durham, York, and Whitby. —Edgar, with the assistance of St Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, formed a code of regulations for English Monks. He is said to have founded or rebuilt, during his reign, forty-seven Monasteries, and caused restitution to be made of all the lands formerly belonging to and taken from Religious Houses.



At the conquest, in 1066, the Monks were greatly oppressed and pillaged; the King seizing upon their treasures, deposing their Abbots, forcing upon them a new code of regulations, and making many arbitrary distinctions, which proved very detrimental to the institution.

These innovations were however stopped by the interposition of Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, who composed for them a new ritual, afterwards called *Missale in usum Sarum*.

During this reign, in 1075, the third and last regulation of Monks was made by Archbishop Lanfranc; and four or five Priors are said to have been built by the King.

William Rufus succeeding his father, in the year 1087, appropriated to himself the revenues of vacant Abbeyes and Bishopricks; and though the Priors of Armithwaite, in Cumberland, of St Nicholas, in Exeter, and the Hospital of St Leonard, in York, were built and endowed at the charge of this Monarch, yet, during his reign, the greatest extortions were practiced upon the Monks, in various parts of the kingdom.

Henry the First, who began his reign 1100, is said to have been a favourer of all Religious Orders. Nine or ten Monasteries were founded during his reign, and five new Orders brought into England;—viz. in the first year of it came the Knights Hospitalers; and, about five years after, the Augustine Canons: towards the year 1128, the Cistercians, the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Monks of Grandmont. During the thirty-five years of this King's reign there were founded above one hundred and fifty Religious Houses.

During the turbulent reign of King Stephen, from the year 1135 to that of 1155, there were upwards of



of one hundred and thirty Religious Houses built, a considerable number of which were royal foundations.

In the beginning of this reign the Knights Templars were introduced into England; as were the Præmonstratensians, in the year 1146; and shortly after the Gilbertine Order was instituted, in Lincolnshire.

1155. Henry the Second affected to be a great friend to Monastic institutions; himself founding the first Carthusian Monastery in England, besides eight others of different Orders. The whole number built, or renewed, during his reign, amounted to one hundred and sixty-four: and though the jealousy of the other Orders had produced (at a General Chapter, in 1151) a Canon against instituting any more Cistercian Abbesss, yet nineteen of the abovementioned were of that Order, and there were then in Christendom upwards of five hundred; which afterwards increased so much, that, in the year 1250, they amounted to eighteen hundred.

1189. Richard the First is said to have disliked the Monastics, and had a mortal hatred to the Black Monks, Cistercians, and Templars; yet, during his reign, there were fifty-seven new foundations.

1199. King John, though no friend to Ecclesiastics, founded a stately Abbey of Cistercians, at Beaulieu, in Hampshire; and four other Religious Houses. During his reign there were founded Monasteries, Hospitals, &c. to the number of eighty-one.

1216. In the reign of King Henry the Third, the riches, and consequently the power of the Ecclesiastics, increased to so alarming a degree,



that an Act of Parliament was passed, to restrain the superstitious prodigality of the people. At the commencement of this reign, the Friars, Preachers, and Friar Minors came into England; and, before the end of it, eight sorts of Friars were among us;

—During this long reign there were instituted, of Priories, Monasteries, and Hospitals, two hundred and ten; several of which were founded by the King.

1275. During the reign of Edward the First, the former Statute, against the appropriation of estates to the Monks, was further strengthened by additional Acts; and the reverence of the people for the Monastics was greatly abated, partly from the insinuations of the Friars. During this reign, Religious Houses, Hospitals, &c. were founded, to the number of one hundred and five; besides a large number of Chantries founded for the Secular Clergy. Edward, during his war with France, seized all the * Alien Priories, and removed the Monks twenty miles from the sea, for fear of their connection with his enemies.

1309. In the nineteen years reign of King Edward the Second, Hospitals and Religious Houses, to the number of forty-four, were founded.

—In this reign, anno 1312, the Knights Templars were seized, their Order dissolved, and their goods confiscated: Which property was first taken by the King, but afterwards given to the Hospitalers.

1328. During the fifty-one years reign of Edward the Third, one of the present Colleges of Oxford was founded, besides other Colleges and Religious Houses, to the number of seventy-five.

1378. Richard the Second restored to the Monks the estates which had been confiscated by his grandfather; but, during his reign, only twenty-two

ty-two

* *Belonging to foreign Monasteries.*

ty-two Religious Houses were built, and none of these royal foundation.

The doctrines of Wickliffe began greatly to prevail about this time, and the Mendicant Friars, in consequence, to lose their reputation.

1400. King Henry the Fourth, in the fourth year of his reign, held a Parliament at Coventry; wherein it was proposed to enact a law to enable the King to raise money to carry on a foreign war, and defend the realm against the Welch and the Scotch, and that the Clergy should be deprived of their temporal possessions. But Archbishop Arundel representing to the King and Commons the impolicy of the measure, and how ready the Clergy were, upon all occasions, to assist the Government, with their prayers and purses, and how great a number of their tenants assisted in time of war, the project was laid aside. It was, however, again renewed by the Commons, in 1410, but without effect. This Monarch built six Colleges and six Hospitals, which were all the Religious Houses built in his reign.

1412. In the second year of the succeeding reign of King Henry the Fifth, another attempt was made against the revenues of the Church, with no better success. But, in a Parliament held the same year, at Leicester, all the Alien Priories were given to the King; except such as were Conventual, or had the liberty of choosing their own Prior.—In this reign only two Colleges and two Abbeys were founded.

1422. During the unhappy reign of King Henry the Sixth, there were founded thirty-three Religious Houses, several of which were founded by the King himself.

1485. King



1460. In the reign of Edward the Fourth there were founded fifteen Religious Houses.

1485. King Henry the Seventh founded some few houses of Observant Friars, and began the Hospital of the Savoy, in London: His mother founded Christ's and St John's Colleges, in Cambridge. Besides these were founded, in his reign, three Hospitals and one College.

1509. Soon after the accession of King Henry the Eighth, the Colleges of Brazen Nose and Corpus Christi, were founded at Oxford; and Magdalene College, in Cambridge; as also, before the dissolution, five Hospitals. The richest Monasteries were founded before the Conquest; at which period there were about one hundred, most of which were afterwards refounded.

Within an hundred and fifty years after the Conquest, or before the time of Henry the Third, there were founded and refounded four hundred and seventy-six Abbeys and Priories; besides eighty-one Alien Priories.

After that time there were many Chantries, Houses of Friars, Hospitals, and Colleges founded; but very few Houses of Monks, Nuns, or Canons. —“I think (says Tanner, who is closely followed “in this account) but one Benedictine House, viz. “that of Holand, in Lancashire, after the death “of Henry the Third: And after the death of “King Edward the Third, (which was about one “hundred and sixty years before the dissolution) “no Monastery, for Monks, or Nuns, or Canons, “except Sion, and five Chartreuse Houses.”—So that the nation in general seemed to have lost its taste for these kind of institutions long before the time of their subversion.



CHAP. II.

The Legend of Seleth.

IT was early in the beginning of the eleventh century, in the reign of Henry the First, when Philip swayed the sceptre of France, Edgar wore the crown of Scotland, and Paschal the Second sat on the see of Rome.

Far removed from the factions of ambition, and the dangers of war, Seleth, a poor shepherd, wandered from his native country of the South, not doubting but his steps were directed by a supernatural power. For in the visions of his nightly slumbers, the holy Virgin appeared unto him, saying, "Arise, Seleth, and go into the Province of York, and seek diligently, in the Valley of Airedale, for a place called KIRKSTALL; for there shalt thou prepare a future habitation for Brethren serving my Son." And Seleth trembled in his sleep, and was fearfully troubled: But the vision continued, "Fear not, Seleth! I am Mary, the Mother of Jesus, of Nazareth, the Saviour of the world."—Upon which he arose, and betook himself to travel, in search of Kirkstall, living upon charity, and the spontaneous productions of the earth; when, after having escaped great dangers and fatigues, he arrived at the entrance of a shady valley, which some herdsman informed him was the place he was in search of:—Here he fixed his solitary abode, paying his devotions to the holy Jesus, and to the blessed Virgin.

Long was his humble cell revered by the neighbouring villagers, and visited by the curious, or
the

the pious. In times of distress, the intercessions of Seleth were resorted to; and the Hermitage of Kirkstall was famed throughout the country.

The reports of his piety and self-denial reaching the ears of some young devotees, Seleth was persuaded by them to accept the office of Superior: And their united body was formed into a small community, building themselves cells beside the River Aire, and regulating themselves by the rules of the Brethren of Lerath, enjoying all things in common, and procuring a livelihood by the labour of their hands.

CHAP. III.

Foundation of the Abbey.

ABOUT this time Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, suffering under a violent disease, and perhaps thinking thereby to make restitution for all his sins, engaged himself, by a solemn vow, to erect a stately Monastery to the Holy Virgin, if he should recover, and again enjoy the blessings of health.

To which end, immediately upon his recovery, he sent for the Abbot of Fountain's Abbey, informed him of his vow, and solemnly, by charter, assigned over his town of Bernoldswick, for the purpose of erecting and endowing a Monastery.

This town was held by him of Hugh Bigot, Earl of Norfolk, at the yearly rent of five marks, and an annual present of a hawk; which rent he had omitted.



omitted to pay for several years; but of this the Monks were ignorant; neither did they know that his title was any way disputable; they therefore, accepted his gift, and built some small offices for their residence, changing the name of the place to that of Mount St Mary. At that time Henry Murdock, formerly a Monk of Fountains, was Archbishop of York: he likewise confirmed, by the Papal authority, the quiet possession of the spot assigned them. And in the year 1147, Alexander, Prior of Fountains, brother to Richard, Abbot of that place, was elected Abbot: And on the 14th of June, in the same year, accompanied by twelve Monks and ten Lay Brothers, set out for the new Monastery of Mount St Mary.

They had not been long in possession of their new settlement before a violent dispute arose between them and the neighbouring inhabitants.—The Church of Bernoldswick, which was very ancient, had served four villages; this being occupied by the Monks, by whom also many of the inhabitants had been displaced from their dwellings, they assembled in the Church, together with their Presbyter and Clerk, and greatly disturbed and abused the Monks, whom they considered as invaders of their property. The Abbot, highly incensed, and, as he pretended, to prevent the like disturbance again, caused the Church to be pulled down to the ground. A complaint against this arbitrary proceeding was laid before the Bishop and Metropolitan; but the Monks moving the suit to Rome, had interest to procure a determination in their favour; for which the following reasons were assigned:—That it was conducive to ripening the fruits of piety; and that it was lawful and pious to destroy a Church, in order to establish a Monastery;



Monastery; the lesser good thereby yielding to the greater.

This suit was scarcely over when the Monks of Mount St. Mary were afflicted with more heavy and grievous misfortunes. The Northern countries being at that time at war with King Stephen, they were frequently plundered by straggling parties of the armies; and their fruit and grain were likewise destroyed by great rains and the badness of the soil. Urged by these evils, and exhausted by a struggle of six years, the Abbot began to think of removing the seat of his Monastery to some more safe and fruitful spot. Whilst he had this in contemplation, it happened that, travelling on some business of his house, he passed through the rich and peaceful valley of Air, where he met with the humble settlement of Seleth.

The Abbot learning the particulars of their origin and situation, and pleased with the beauty of the Vale, the river flowing through it, and the conveniency of the wood for building, deemed it a proper place for the seating of his Abbey. He therefore began gently to admonish the brethren of the insufficiency of their present state for the safety of their souls; urging the smallness of their number; that they, being all Laymen, and without a Priest, were like sheep without a shepherd; and advising them to adopt some more perfect form of religious government: Whereupon several of them agreed to become Monks in his Convent; and others, receiving a small sum of money for their habitations, departed.

The Abbot, in the mean time, repaired to Henry de Lacy, their Patron, and laid before him the present state of their house, their poverty and distress; he acquainted him with the desirable spot they

they had discovered at Kirkstall, and the benefits which would accrue to them by their removal thither : In which he so well succeeded, that Henry de Lacy not only gave him consent to their removal, but also, by his interest, obtained of William de Poitou, the owner of Kirkstall, his grant of that place, and its appurtenances, for the translation of the Monastery ; on condition that the Monks should pay to him, and his heirs, the annual rent of five marks.

Here the Abbot built a Church, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, with some humble offices, according to the custom of the Order, and called the Monastery, KIRKSTALL. On the 14th of May, 1152, in the reign of King Stephen, and Roger being Archbishop of York, he brought over his Monks from their former House, now converted into a Grange. The valley of Aire, though pleasant, abounded only in wood, water, and stone ; the soil, at that time, being in a barren, rude, uncultivated state. The River parted the lands of Wm Poitou from those of William de Ramaville ; the Monks dwelling on the Northern side of the River, South of which they had no property. But at length they extended their territories, from the River to the declivity of the hill ; and by their industry in clearing and tilling the grounds, rendered them fruitful.

The number of their Monks likewise greatly increased ; and their estates, by the prudent management and attention of the Abbot, were much improved and enlarged.

In all things they were assisted by their Founder, Henry de Lacy, who furnished them with provisions, or advanced them money, as the exigency of their affairs required.

He



He, with his own hands, laid the foundation of the Church, which was finished entirely at his expence.

The growing prosperity of this House was, however, a little interrupted by Hugh Bigot, Earl of Norfolk, who instituted a suit in the King's Courts, for his estates of Bernoldswick; from which, by a legal process, the Monks were ejected.

But the Abbot going to the Earl, threw himself at his feet, declared himself ignorant of his claim, and implored his mercy; and by his prayers and entreaties obtained a restitution of it, on condition of paying the accustomed rent of five marks, or a palfrey to that value, and also a hawk.

This rent was afterwards remitted, at the intercession of King Henry the Second, who persuaded the Earl, for the remission of his sins, to bestow it on the Abbey; reserving to himself the above rent during life, which, at his death, was to cease.—The charter was witnessed and confirmed by the King.

This Abbot presided thirty-five years; during which time, the Church and both the Dormitories, for Monks and Lay Brothers, the Refectories, Cloisters, and Chapter-House, with other offices, were built, with stone and wood: He likewise made all the offices for their Granges, and disposed of all matters, both within and without, most prudently; preserving the ample woods for future exigencies, by cutting elsewhere the wood then used for building.

CHAP.



CHAP. IV.

Succession of Abbots.

ALEXANDER was succeeded by Hageth, Prior of Fountains; during whose incumbency, this House was visited with various misfortunes and troubles.

Henry the Second, by the advice of his Counsellors, disposed them of their Grange of Micklethwaite, with all the fees of Collingham and Bardsey. The Abbot endeavoured to recover it, both by humble solicitations, and by presenting the King with the text of the Gospel, and a golden chalice; but those not prevailing, the Monks blamed him for the loss of all. Besides this, a mortality raged among the cattle of the Monastery, insomuch that they were reduced to great poverty.

After a long and vain struggle against the evil fortune of the House, Hageth at last resigned, leaving the Monastery in a most deplorable state of poverty and debt. And was succeeded by Lambert; who, during the three years of his reign, experienced much trouble and vexation: For Sir Richard Bland claiming their Grange, at Clivactier, and the Abbot finding it his right, resigned it to their Patron, Robert de Lacy; who gave them the village of Akerington, in exchange.

The Abbot, being possessed of it, removed the inhabitants, and converted it into a Grange, for the use of the Monastery: But the disposed inhabitants burnt the Grange, with all its furniture, and slew three Lay Brothers, who managed it.

The



The Abbot, after he had buried the dead, repaired again to Robert de Lacy, and with tears recommended his case to him ; which that Nobleman warmly espousing, would have banished the offenders and their families : but they appeasing the Abbot, by the most humiliating submission, he, with the consent of the Patron, pardoned them, on their making satisfaction to God and the Brethren for this sin ; renouncing all right to the Grange, and paying, in money, for the damage they had done. The Abbot then rebuilt the Grange, and soon after died.

The next Abbot was Turgesius, a man remarkable for the gloominess of his devotion, for his abstinence, and voluntary mortifications of his body ; for he was always cloathed in sackcloth, never wearing more than one cloak and a tunick, even in winter, and no socks. He never tasted wine, unless no other drink was to be had : Besides which, he always wept at his devotions, and often in his discourse. He abode here nine years, and retired to Fountains ; in which place he soon after died.

He was succeeded by Heilas, who had been a Monk of Rock Abbey. He was an industrious man, and well versed in temporal affairs ; for which knowledge he had sufficient occasion, the House being greatly involved in debt. Besides which, their Patron, H. de Lacy, had taken so great an antipathy to him, that he would not suffer him to come into his presence. But, by his prudent conduct, he not only gained the good opinion of De Lacy, but got so far into his favour, that he went with him to King John, to petition him to restore the Grange of Micklethwaite, which King Henry his father had taken from them : But they could not obtain it, unless they would take it with
Collingham

Collingham and Bardsey, as a fee farm, at the annual rent of 90*l.* to which they were obliged to consent.

About this time the Soccage of Adle, and town of Alerton; viz. half a Knight's fee, and some other places, were added to this Abbey. But King John took away their Grange of Hoton; and the land at Thorpe he gave to one Laurence, Clerk of Witton.

From Heylas to John Ripley, the twenty-sixth and last Abbot, a term of above three hundred years, no circumstance of importance is recorded, either relative to the characters of the Abbots, or the fortunes of the House. It however appears to have enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, and increasing fame, during the greater part of that time; for the dates of its richest endowments are since the year 1200. And at the dissolution, in 1528, it was valued at 512*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* per annum,—according to Speed's History.

A Catalogue of the Abbots of Kirkstall.

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|---------|----------------|
| 1. | ALEXANDER, | elected | 1147—died. |
| 2. | Ralph Hageth, | do. | 1182—resigned. |
| 3. | Lambert - - | do. | 1191—died. |
| 4. | Turgesius - - | do. | —resigned. |
| 5. | Heylas' from Rock Abbey | 1209— | |
| 6. | Ralph de Newcastle - | — | died. |
| 7. | Walter . - - - | 1221— | |
| 8. | Mauricius - - - - | — | died. |
| 9. | Adam - - - - | 1246— | |
| 10. | Hugh Michelay - - | 1259— | |
| 11. | Simon - - - - | 1262— | |
| | | B 2 | 12. William |



12.	William de Leedes	-	1269	_____
13.	Gilbert de Cotles	- -	1275	_____
14.	Henry Carr	- - -	1280	_____
15.	Hugh de Grymston	-	1284	_____
16.	Joseph de Bridesal	-		_____
17.	Walter	- - -	1313	_____
18.	William	- -	1341	_____
19.	Roger de Leedes	-	1349	_____
20.	John de Bardesey	-	1399	_____
21.	William Grayson	-		_____displaced.
22.	Thomas Wymbersley		1468	_____died.
23.	Robert Kelingbec	-	1499	_____
24.	William Stockdale	-	1501	_____
25.	William Marshall	-	1509	_____
26.	John Ripley, the last Abbot		1528	_____

CHAP. V.

Various Matters.

THE Monks of Kirkstall Abbey were of the Cistercian Order, which was a set sprung from the Benedictines; the distinction of its name and Order having their origin in the town of Cîteaux, in Burgundy: Were instituted in the year 1098, by one Robert, formerly Abbot of Molesme, in that province; he and twenty of his Religious withdrawing, on account of the wicked lives of the greater part of the Monks of his Abbey: when they were joined by one Stephen Hardinge, who gave them some additional rules to those they had before been governed by, and brought them into some

some repute. These rules were called *Chartais Chartæ*, and confirmed in the year 1107, by Pope Urban the Second. Stephen is therefore, by some, reckoned their principal Founder.

They were also called Bernardines, from St. Bernard, Abbot of Clerival, in the diocese of Langros, about the year 1116; and who himself founded one hundred and sixty Monasteries of this Order. Sometimes they were called White Monks, from the colour of their habit; which was a white cassock, with a narrow scapulary, or scarf; and over that a black gown, when they went abroad; but a white one when they went to Church. Their Monasteries, which became very numerous, were generally built in solitary and uncultivated places, and all dedicated to the Holy Virgin. This Order came into England in the year 1128. The first House of the Order was at Waverly, in Surry; and, before the dissolution, had eighty-five Houses here.

There were, in the government of every Abbey, besides six principal officers, a number of inferiors.

First Magister Operis, or Master of the Fabric; who probably had the care of the buildings of and belonging to the Monastery; and whose business it was to survey and keep them in repair.

Eleemosynarius, or the Almoner; who superintended the alms of the House, which were every day distributed to the poor at the gate of the Monastery; divided the alms upon the Founder's day, and at other anniversaries; and, in some places, had the care of the maintenance and education of the Choristers.

Pitantiarius, who had the distribution of the allowances, upon particular occasions, over and above the common provisions.



Sacrista, or Sexton ; to whose care were committed the vessels, books, and vestments, belonging to the Church ; and who looked after and accounted for the oblations at the great Altar, and other Altars or Images in the Church ; and such legacies as were given, either to the fabric, or for utensils : He likewise provided bread and wine for the Sacrament, and took care of burying the dead.

Camerarius, or the Chamberlain, had the management of the Dormitory, provided the bedding for the Monks, with razors, and towels, for shaving them ; likewise part, if not all their cloathing.

Cellerarius ; whose office it was to provide all sorts of provisions and liquors consumed in the Convent ; as also firing and kitchen utensils.

Thesaurarius ; who received all the common rents and revenues of the Monastery, and paid all the common expences.

Precentor ; who had the chief direction of the Choir service ; and not only presided over the singing men and Choristers, but provided them with books, paid their salaries, and repaired the organs. He had also the custody of the Seal, kept the *Liber Diurnalis*, or Chapter-book ; and provided parchment and ink for the writers, and colours for the limners, employed in writing and illuminating books for the Library.

Hostiliarius, or *Hospitiliarius* ; whose business it was to manage the entertainment of strangers, and to provide them with necessaries.

Infirmarius ; who had the care of the Infirmary, and of the sick Monks carried there ; for whom he was to provide physic, and other necessaries ; and to wash, and prepare for burial, the bodies of the dead. He was likewise to shave all the Monks in the Convent.

Refectiarius ;

Refectonarius ; who looked after the Refectory, and provided table-cloths, napkins, glasses, dishes, plates, spoons, and other requisites. He had the custody of the cups, ewers, and all the silver utensils belonging to the House, except the Church plate.

There was likewise *Coquinarius*, or the Cook ; *Gardinarius*, or the Gardener ; and *Portorius*, or the Porter.

Every great Abbey had a room, called the *Scriptorium* ; where several Scribes were employed in transcribing books for the Library. They sometimes indeed wrote the Ledger-books of the House, the Missals, and other books used in divine service ; but were chiefly employed on other works, such as the Fathers, Classics, or History. The Monks, in general, were so zealous for this work, that they frequently procured gifts of lands and Churches, to be solely appropriated to the carrying of it on.

Besides this, they had also particular persons appointed to take notice of, and record the principal events which happened in the kingdom ;—which, at the end of the year, were digested and formed into annals.

CHAP.



CHAP. VI.

Present State of the Abbey.

A LATE author has given us the following sketch of the present appearance of the ruins of this Abbey.—

“ If, in the progress of our observations on the ruined edifices of religion, we have occasionally commented upon the dreary site of some Abbeys, clear it is, from the specimen before us, that even the same Order of Monks (Cistercian) did not agree in their ideas of local mortification or happiness; the Founder of this Abbey having seemingly steered aloof from penance, by courting neither the sterile damp, nor exposed situation; as nothing can exceed the sylvan scenes and wildly rural beauties of the place. Nor was Selet, the original Superior, wrong, in this sense, even upon the legendary ground of a divine impulse, when he made this alluring spot his abode. Ill, methinks, did it comport with the gloomy, weeping Turgesius, the fourth Abbot, that clerical Heraclitus of his time; whose view was that of making every pleasure to be grief, piety pain, knowledge ignorance, and strength infirmity.

“ Neither is the ruin less pleasing and picturesque, on whatever side you approach it. The soothing and harmonious variety of its parts, with the venerable aspect of the whole, captivate the mind to that degree, as to cancell, in a manner, all concern for its present state. For, like the Censor, Cato, in his old age, it supports that dignity in decay which seems to boast a triumph over time.

“ Again,

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“ Again, the blended vegetation every where dispersed, on the crown of the Dormitory and other places, like the airy Garden of Babylon, of which Historians speak, seems to familiarize the wonder of those days : While the cells below, made more subterraneous from accumulated ruin without, join in giving the whole all the peculiarity and air of ancient fiction, or Fairy enchantment.”

This stately pile of ruins extends over a considerable space : Their length, from North to South, measuring 340 feet ; and from East to West, 445 feet ; and a quadrangle, of 115 by 143 feet, is inclosed within the walls. At a small distance, North-West of this mass, stands what was once the chief gate of the Monastery ; it is now converted into a farm-house.

The Church is in the form of a cross. Over the intersection of the cross aisles with the body, which is within fifty feet of the East end, stands a handsome square tower, *very lately in good repair* ; said, by Dr Burton, to have been built in the time of Henry the Eighth. From some marks in this tower, it appears the Church has had two different roofs. The body is divided into a nave, and two side aisles, by a double row of massive columns, composed alternately of an assemblage of eight and twelve smaller ones ; having a kind of Saxon capital, and square pedestal ; the side of each pedestal measuring two yards. These columns support pointed arches ; over which is a range of windows, whose arches are semicircular.

The roof, between the Tower and the East end, where the high Altar stood, was adorned with fret work and intersecting arches ; the greater part of which has lately fallen in, covering the altar in its ruins. There is not the least trace of a single monument



monument within the Church ; neither is it loaded with that profusion of trifling ornaments, so common in what are stiled Gothic buildings, but is justly admirable for its elegant simplicity. It is observable that it does not point due East and West.

At the East end of the Church is the broken remains of the high Altar, and of stone pots for holy water ; which indicate that there were at this place six smaller Altars, dedicated to their respective saints.

The Eastern window appears to have been spacious, and is said to have been of fine painted glass.

South of the Church, and on the East front of the ruins, are several vaulted chambers, supported by strong columns, which have a most gloomy appearance ; the southernmost of them is near falling.

On the South side, near the Palace, is the burial-place for the Monks, now converted into an orchard, and overgrown with deep weeds.

In the arched chamber leading to this Cemetery, are the remains of several large stone coffins : And it is said that some persons not long ago, pulling down part of the wall in this passage, discovered a parcel of mouldering bones.

The arch over the West door of the Church is circular, and decorated with zig-zag ornaments : Indeed most of the arches about this Monastery, the Church excepted, are circular. Many of the mouldering walls are overshadowed with trees, and mantled with ivy ; a circumstance which adds greatly to the solemnity of the scene.

There is a story of a subterraneous passage at the South-East corner of the ruins, which was probably neither more nor less than one of the larger drains.

The

On the ceiling of a room in the Gatehouse is inscribed,——

Mille et Quingentos postquam compleverit orbis.

Tresq; & ter demos per sua signi Deus.

Prima salutiferi post cunabula Christi,

Cui datur omnium honor, gloria, laus, & amor.

The situation of this Abbey is about sixty yards North of the River Aire; between which and the ruins there are vestiges of two fish-ponds. It is about a quarter of a mile North-West of the village of Kirkstall-Bridge; and about three miles distant from the town of Leeds.

The following persons were buried here, though their monumental inscriptions are not extant:—

Robert de Lacy, in the year 1193.

Henry de Paulino, son of William de Allerton.

Thomas, son of Ralph de Beeston. And

Walter, son of Adam Sampson de Pudsey.

Besides the Lacys, this Abbey had several powerful Protectors. Pope Adrian the Fourth, an Englishman, in the year 1156, confirmed to them their Church, and all their other possessions; as did also King Henry the Second. Henry the Third took them into his immediate protection: And King Edward the First, in 1276, likewise granted his protection to the Abbot and Monks, then greatly in debt; and committed the care of them to Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln and Baron of Pontefract, their Patron, as heir to their Founder.

A variety of benefactions, consisting of lands, tenements, rents, tythes, &c. were bequeathed to this Monastery, by persons of different places,
adjacent



adjacent and at a distance; particularly at Adle, Allerton, Allerton-Gledow, Beeston, Burley, Heddingley, Horsforth, Middleton, &c. &c. The whole amounting to a very considerable annual income. Besides which, they possessed such large herds of cattle, that, at the Visitation of their Monastery, in the year 1301, they were found to have this stock upon their land,—viz. 216 draught oxen, 160 cows, 152 yearlings and bullocks, 90 calves, and 4000 sheep and lambs. But, notwithstanding these, and their large revenues, the Monks of this House, through some mismanagement, became indebted in the sum of 5248l. 15s. 7d.—and were forced to beg the protection of several Princes against their creditors, till, by limiting their expences, they should be able to pay their debts; which, in 1301, were reduced to 160l.—which was paid off long before the dissolution.

At the dissolution, the site of the Abbey was given by the King to one John Pakeman, a Gentleman of the King's household.

The Duke of Montague is its present proprietor, and allows a person 10l. per annum for taking care of it.

The Arms of the Abbey were—Azure, three swords, their points in base, hilts and pommels or.

The seal of Kirkstall Abbey was—An image of the Virgin Mary, with the Infant Jesus in her arms; and this inscription,—*T. quid pate—una Valet.*

Mr Thoresby gives an account of many curiously painted bricks found among the ruins of this Abbey, of various sizes; some of the shape of those now in use, but larger: the largest of which were about eleven inches in length, and five in breadth,

breadth, yet only two inches thick. These being taken from the foundation of the Abbey walls, seem to prove, that bricks were used in those parts about six hundred years ago. And in the year 1713, as the Gardener was digging in the orchard, beside the Abbey, he found a stone coffin, with a skeleton two yards in length, the bones entire.— But, what was most surprising, was the cover:— Not one entire stone, as usually, but composed of very curious tiles, of various colours and forms, circular as well as square and triangular; larger than those of the Roman tessalated pavements, yet less than those used in after ages: Some of these have *fleurs de lys*, of different colours from the tiles themselves. By the fine appearance, it was presently concluded to be a person of honour; but, from the circumstances of its being interred not within the Church, the supposition is improbable; and it is most likely, that it was some Master workman, who invented, or greatly improved the art of making or adorning tiles.—

There seemed to have been an inscription, that might probably have determined the matter, if the labourers had not lost or misplaced the letters, of which only three were to be found, viz. *H. R. T.* painted upon as many small tiles.

The Abbot of Kirkstall's drinking glass was preserved by the relations of Ripley, the last Abbot, and presented to Mr Thoresby; it is described as follows: in depth about one foot, and nine inches round the edge, beautifully waved with white enamel.

The Abbot of Kirkstall's salt-seller was likewise preserved, and belonged to Mr Thoresby's collection of curiosities; it had eight triangular salts

C

placed



placed in the stock, which was of coarse marble or stone, with a hollow for one of silver at the top.

Likewise the Abbot of Kirkstall's stirrup, made of cast iron, the sale seven inches broad.

A curious altar piece belong to Kirkstall Abbey, on which was painted the history of Joseph of Arimathea's entombing our Saviour, whose emaciated corps was very well represented in a winding sheet. Eight alabaster statutes gilded, and enclosed in a space of nine inches broad and thirteen long, were attached to this legend, and the pix, an iron box for preserving the edicts.

CHAP. VII.

Conclusion.

THE broken and imperfect accounts which have been handed down respecting this, and the generality of ancient Religious Houses, render it impossible to give a complete history. This circumstance, so truly to be lamented, arises, in a great degree, from the barbarous and general destruction which was made of books and writings by the persons employed to deface those places, at the dissolution of all the Monasteries, by King Henry the Eighth; when, according to the account of John Bale, all, or most of the books and writings of the Monks, were sold, by cart-loads, for waste-paper, or left to the mercy of the illiterate mob.

The allegations brought against the Monks, to defend the measure of the abolition of their House and Order, were—their luxurious and debauched manner of living, pretended miracles, impostures, &c. But when we consider, that these accounts were given by the persons sent for the purpose of impeaching

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impeaching their conduct, and reflect upon the character of this Monarch, and the exigencies of the State at that time, we must be inclined to think; that the accounts of the visitors were purposely exaggerated; and that the King was more influenced by avarice, to desire their possessions, than by a wish for the good of the country, to put an end to their pretended abuses.

Monasteries were then the repositories, as well as seminaries of learning; many valuable books, and national records, as well as private evidences, having been preserved in their Libraries, the only places wherein they could have been safely lodged in those turbulent times: Many of them, which had escaped the ravages of the Danes, were destroyed, with more than Gothic barbarity, at their dissolution.

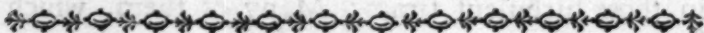
Every Abbey had at least one person, whose office it was to instruct youth. And to the Monks, the Historians of this country, are we chiefly beholden for the knowledge we have of former national events. The arts of painting, architecture, and printing, were also successfully cultivated within their walls. Religious Houses were likewise the Hospitals for the sick and poor, many of both being easily relieved by them. They also afforded lodging and entertainment to travellers, at a time when there were no inns.

The Nobility and Gentry, who were heirs to their Founders, in them could provide for a certain number of ancient and faithful servants; by procuring them *corodies*, or stated allowances of meat and drink, and cloaths. It was also an asylum, or retreat for aged, indigent persons, of good families.

The places near the sites of these Abbeys were considerably benefited by the concourse of people



resorting to them, by fairs procured for them, and by their exemption from the Forest Laws; add to which, the Monastic estates were generally let at very easy rents, the fines given at renewals included. To conclude,—their stately buildings, and magnificent Churches, were striking ornaments to the country. The furious zeal with which these were demolished, their fine carvings destroyed, and their beautiful painted windows broken, would almost tempt one to imagine, that the persons who directed these depredations were actuated with an enmity to the fine arts, instead of a hatred to superstition.



VERSES,

ON THE RUINS OF KIRKSTALL ABBEY.

BY A LADY.

COULD hallow'd walls or ruin'd Tow'rs inspire,
Or moss-grown cells call forth Parnassian fire,
Thy praise, O KIRKSTALL! should be sweetly sung,
Thy ancient grandeur dwell upon my tongue!
The wand'ring Muse should seek the time afar,
When superstition, in her iron car,
O'er this sad realm her bloody banners wav'd,
And servile hearts in fetters strong enslav'd:
Twas then thy roofs re-echoed to the sound
Of midnight dirges, solemn and profound;

Or

Or wrapt in silence and mysterious gloom,
 Save where the taper trembled o'er the tomb,
 Or round some consecrated image shed
 The pallid lustre on th' unconscious dead.
 Here cloister'd learning slumber'd in the cell,
 While Monkish legends reason's pow'r expel.
 Here fabling Bards, by error deem'd divine,
 Set forth the wonders of some sacred shrine.
 Now mute each tongue, and deaf each list'ning ear,
 Nothing but dumb and lifeless stones lie here.
 Thy haughty tow'rs, which rais'd aloft in air,
 Tempests have wreck'd, and hurricanes shall tear;
 Till, low in dust, no vestige to be seen,
 Thy walls lie level with the tufted green:
 Yet shall the spot to every Muse be dear,
 And pensive Genius oft shall wander here.

LINES,

*Addressed to a company of young Persons, whilst
 viewing the Ruins of Kirkstall Abbey.*

SEE how the sharp, corroding tooth of Time
 Hath rent these massy walls!—The stones
 Dissolve!
 And, like the feeble sinews of old age,
 Relax, and shrink, and tumble to the ground!

Ah me! shall ruthless Time's devouring pow'r
 Thus bow the firmest works of busy man?
 'Tis even so!—Yea, lastly, he himself,

The

The great projector of these haughty piles,
With all his riches, honours, and renown,
Hides his poor head in dust—and is no more!

Come, then, my Friends, upon a surer base
Let's build such pleasures as will ne'er decay;
Such as in endless youthful beauty shine
When life's gay dream (like to a tale that's told)
Is past, and in oblivion's shade forgot.
Safe on that Rock, which rears its noble head
Beyond mutation's stroke, and ev'ry foe,
Let's build our heav'nly house!—A house wherein
No moth; nor rust, nor thief, nor time, nor death,
Can e'er approach, its treasures to annoy.

Now in your bloom, and health, and smiling
years,

The golden season grasp!—Now lay up store
In fairest mansions of celestial peace!
So, when this earthly, transient scene is o'er,
Bright Cherub Angels, natives of that land,
Shall lead you, raptur'd, to your radiant home,
Where all the myriads of the ransom'd throng
Shall hail you welcome to the mount of bliss!
There God's unsully'd Light, and Life, and Love,
In one incessant glorious blaze shall crown
Our souls with joy and everlasting rest,—
Beyond what Man or Angel's tongue can name,
Or largest stretch of human heart desire!

C. CAYLEY.

WRITTEN



WRITTEN NEAR KIRKSTALL ABBEY.

In ancient days of superstitious dread,
When lordly abbots kept the world in fear ;
When monkish craft his secret banquet spread,
Yet seem'd in outward penance most austere .
Yon cloister'd pile, by wealthy bigots fed,
With fretted roof was wont its porch to rear,
Where smothering ivy now is seen to braid
Each beetling fragment with it umbrage drear :
Disastrous change ! yet, to the mental view,
More pleas'd such pomp in ruins I survey,
Then when in sainted guise the priestly crew
To drowsy vespers drag'd their loitering way ;
More pleas'd with pious worth's unblazon'd deeds,
Than conclaves of grey cowls, or treasuries of beads.

F I N I S.

